

otherwise and these were prepared to defy the wishes of the council and organise what had come to be regarded as a ritual for the reception of good news. If Bloemfontein and Mafeking merited municipal approbation, why not Kimberley, Ladysmith, and indeed any other successes that might come along in the future?²



Reproduced by kind permission from H.W. Wilson, *With the Flag to Pretoria: A History of the Boer War*, 1901.

To their credit, a celebration marking the relief of Bloemfontein in March had received the support and sanction of the borough council, and indicated the extent of public opinion that seemingly approved of the war. The pattern of a local celebration was well-established by May on the receipt of the cheering news from Mafeking. The ringing of church bells was the first intimation of the welcome tidings. Written confirmation was provided by the enterprising editor of the *Banbury Guardian* who displayed a post office telegram in his office window. From then on the celebration gathered momentum, works hooters were sounded, and salvos rent the air. Friend greeted friend on the good news, while most buildings displayed bunting or at least a flag. Church bells were supplemented throughout the day by the carillon chimes at the parish church playing *Rule Britannia*. The first organised demonstration on that memorable day was a parade of the Yeomanry,

² T. Pakenhem, *The Boer War* (1988), passim. *Banbury Guardian*, 8 and 15 March 1900.